

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MEXICO 5496

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, MX

SUBJ: ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS: COMMENTS OF MEXICAN CONSUL AT PORT
ISABEL.

REF: MEXICO 5495

1. THE MEXICAN CONSULAR OFFICER (ZAMORA) ASSIGNED TO DUTY
AT THE INS DETENTION CENTER IN PORT ISABEL WAS INTERVIEWED IN
SPANISH ON JUNE 24 BY A REPORTER FROM THE POPULAR "24 HORAS"
NEWS PROGRAM CITED REFTEL. HIS COMMENTS FOLLOW IN FREE TRANS-
LATION.

2. REPORTER: MR. CONSUL WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU WHAT IS THE
SYSTEM FOLLOWED IN THIS DETENTION CENTER ONCE MEXICANS WHO HAVE
ILLEGALLY CROSSED THE BORDER ARE BROUGHT HERE.

CONSUL: WELL, LOOK, OUR COMPATRIOTS STAY HERE WHILE THEY ARE
DOCUMENTED; ALL THE DOCUMENTATION IS PREPARED HERE FOR THEIR
RETURN TO OUR COUNTRY. THIS DOCUMENTATION HAS TO BE SIGNED BY US
ALSO. AS THERE ARE SOME 150 TO 200 PERSONS NATURALLY IT TAKES
ABOUT TWO DAYS, THREE DAYS MAXIMUM BEFORE THEY CAN LEAVE HERE.

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PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN PLACES CLOSE TO THE BORDER, IN THE BORDER

AREA ARE RELEASED IN MATAMOROS. THOSE WHO LIVE BEYOND THE BORDER STATES ARE TAKEN FROM MATAMOROS TO SAN LUIS POTOSI IN BUSES.

REPORTER: LAST YEAR, MR. ZAMORA, HOW MANY MEXICANS WERE BROUGHT TO THIS CENTER AT LOS FRESNOS?

CONSUL: ABOUT 48,000.

REPORTER: AND HOW ARE THEY BROUGHT HERE? UNDER WHAT RULES? IN WHAT FASHION?

CONSUL: WELL, ALL HAVE BEEN DETAINED BECAUSE OF THEIR ILLEGAL STATUS, FOR HAVING COME INTO THE COUNTRY ILLEGALLY, YOU SEE, AND THEY ARRIVE IN BUSES FROM ALL THE DIFFERENT PLACES WHERE THEY WERE ARRESTED.

REPORTER: YOU TOLD US ALSO THAT THEY ARRIVE IN TRUCKS IN WHICH FRUIT IS TRANSPORTED.

CONSUL: WELL, THIS IS WHEN THEY ENTER THE U.S. SURREPTITIOUSLY, YOU SEE. MANY TIMES "ENGANCHADORES". (RECRUITERS) PEOPLE WHO ARE INVOLVED IN THIS INHUMAN TRAFFIC, CHARGE OUR COMPATRIOTS UP TO \$400 EACH TO BRING THEM, OR MORE THAN \$400. THEY BRING THEM, THEY HAVE BROUGHT THEM, WE HAVE HAD CASES IN WHICH THEY HAVE BROUGHT PEOPLE IN TRUCKS WITH A DOUBLE BOTTOM WITH A PLATFORM IN ONE PART WITH 40 TO 50 PEOPLE IN THE DOUBLE BOTTOM OF A TRUCK COVERED WITH CABBAGES OR GRAPEFRUIT, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH A TREMENDOUS DANGER THAT THEY MAY BE SUFFOCATED, CHARGING THEM \$400 FOR THE ILLUSION THAT THEY ARE GOING TO TAKE THEM TO CHICAGO, WHICH IS NOT TRUE. THEY SUFFER. THESE PEOPLE SELL THEIR BELONGINGS WHERE THEY LIVE, GUANAJUATO, SAN LUIS, ZACATECAS. THEY SELL THEIR CATTLE, WHATEVER THEY HAVE, TO THESE SMUGGLERS WITH THE ILLUSION THAT THEY WILL GET TO CHICAGO, TO INDUSTRIAL CENTERS TO WORK. USUALLY THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN BECAUSE THEY ARE ARRESTED BEFORE GETTING THERE AND THEY LOSE ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING.

REPORTER: HAVE THERE BEEN DEATHS WHEN THEY TRAVEL IN THESE TRUCKS WITH DOUBLE BOTTOMS?

CONSUL: NOT HERE, FORTUNATELY. WE HAVE NOT HAD A CASE OF THAT.

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3. FOREGOING IS EMBASSY'S INFORMAL TRANSLATION.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: SUGGEST CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO MAKING THIS STATEMENT PUBLIC IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD (PERHAPS THROUGH VOA). STATEMENT IS USEFUL IN THAT IT PUTS BLAME WHERE IT BELONGS, I.E., ON THE MEXICAN ENGANCHADORES WHO HIRE BRACEROS INTO ILLEGAL ENTRY, RATHER THAN ON INS DETENTION CAMPS WHICH ARE MERELY A

NECESSARY WAY STATION IN THE REPATRIATION PROCESS. INCIDENTALLY,
WOULD APPRECIATE REACTION TO THE AMBASSADOR'S SUGGESTION THAT
NAME OF CAMPS BE CHANGED FROM DETENTION CENTERS TO REPATRIATION
CENTERS.

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